

In convention. June 12, 1776. A declaration of rights made by the representatives of the good people of Virginia, assembled in full and free convention; which rights do pertain to them and their posterity, as the basis and foundation of government. Postscript [To Virginia Gazette by Alexander Purdie] Friday, June 14, 1776.

FRIDAY, June 14, 1776. POSTSCRIPT. No. 72.

to Virginia Gazette by Alexander Purdie

IN CONVENTION.

JUNE 12, 1776.

*A **DECLARATION of RIGHTS** made by the representatives of the good people of **Virginia**, assembled in full and free Convention; which rights do pertain to them, and their posterity, as the basis and foundation of government.*

1. THAT all men are by nature equally free and independent, and have certain inherent rights, of which, when they enter into a state of society, they cannot, by any compact, deprive or divest their posterity; namely, the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety.
2. That all power is vested in, and consequently derived from, the people; that magistrates are their trustees and servants, and at all times amenable to them.
3. That government is, or ought to be, instituted for the common benefit, protection, and security, of the people, nation, or community; of all the various modes and forms of government that is best, which is capable of producing the greatest degree or happiness and safety, and is most effectually secured against the danger of mal-administration; and that whenever any government shall be found inadequate or contrary to these purposes, a majority of the community hath an indubitable, unalienable, and indefeasible right, to reform, alter, or abolish it, in such manner as shall be judged most conducive to the publick weal.
4. That no man, or set of men, are entitled to exclusive on separate emoluments of privileges from the community, but in consideration of publick services; which, not being descendible, neither ought the offices of magistrate, legislator, or judge, to be hereditary.
5. That the legislative and executive powers of the state should be separate and distinct from the judicative; and that the members of the two first may be restrained from oppression, by feeling

and participating the burthens of the people, they should, at fixed periods, be reduced to a private station, return into that body from which they were originally taken, and the vacancies be supplied by frequent, certain, and regular elections, in which all, or any part of the former members, to be again eligible, or ineligible, as the laws shall direct.

6. That elections of members to serve as representatives of the people, in assembly, ought to be free; and that all men, having sufficient evidence of permanent common interest with, and attachment to, the community, have the right of suffrage, and cannot be taxed or deprived of their property for publick uses without their own consent, or that of their representatives so elected nor bound by any law to which they have not, in lie manner, assented, for the publick good.

7. That all power of suspending laws, or the execution of laws, by any authority without consent of the representatives of the people, is injurious to their rights, and ought not to be exercised.

8. That in all capital or criminal prosecutions a man hath a right to demand the cause and nature of his accusation, to be confronted with the accusers and witnesses, to call for evidence in his favour, and to a speedy trial by an impartial jury of his vicinage, without whose unanimous consent he cannot be found guilty, nor can he be compelled to give evidence against himself; that no man be deprived of his liberty except by the law of the land, or the judgment of his peers.

9. That excessive bail ought not to be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

10. That general warrants, whereby any officer or messenger may be commanded to search suspected places without evidence of a fact committed, or to seize any person or persons not named, or whose offence is not particularly described and supported by evidence, are grievous and oppressive, and ought not to be granted.

11. That in controversies respecting property, and in suits between man and man, the ancient trial by jury is preferable to any other, and ought to be held sacred.

12. That freedom of the press is one of the great bulwarks of liberty, and can never be restrained but by despotick governments.

13. That a well regulated militia, composed of the body of the people, trained to arms, is the proper, natural, and safe defence of a free state; that standing armies, in time of peace, should be avoided, as dangerous to liberty and that, in all cases, the military should be under strict subordination to, and governed by, the civil power.

14. That the people have a right to uniform government; and therefore, that no government separate from, or independent of the government of *Virginia*, ought to be erected or established within the limits thereof.

15. That no free government, or the blessing of liberty, can be preserved to any people but by a firm adherence to justice, moderation, temperance, frugality, and virtue, and by frequent recurrence to fundamental principles.

16. That religion, or the duty which we owe to our CREATOR, and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence; and therefore, all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience; and that it is the mutual duty of all to practice Christian forbearance, love, and charity, towards each other.

EDMUND PENDLETON, Pr. (*A copy*)

John Tazewell, clerk of the Conv.

WILLIAMSBURG, *June 14.*

THIS day arrived in town, from Georgia, on his way to the General Congress, GEORGE WALTON, esq; one of the delegates from that province; also lieutenants Walton and Pannell, on the recruiting service. By these gentlemen, we learn that the Convention of Georgia have authorised their delegates in Congress to concur in any scheme which may be proposed for the benefit of the United Colonies, even to a total separation from Great Britain; and that, in the mean while, a form of government had been established in the province.

We also learn, that the islands upon the coast of Georgia, which abound with live-stock, are continually infested by the British pirates; but that, by the vigilance and activity of the soldiers, and adjacent inhabitants, they have not been able as yet to obtain any supplies, and, in the frequent skirmishes, the pirates have always been soundly drubbed,—as they ought to be.

The following gentlemen are chosen officers for the six companies of light horse directed to be raised by the Hon. General Convention, viz. Captains, *Theodorick Bland* , jun. *Benjamin Temple*, *John Jameson*, *Lewelling Jones*, *Henry Lee* , jun. and *John Nelson* , esquires. Lieutenants, *Richard Call*, *Cuthbert Harrison*, *William Penn*, *Spotswood Dandridge*, *John Belfield* , and *Addison Lewis* , esquires. Cornets, *John Henry*, *James Jones*, *William Lidsay*, *John Watts*, *Henry Peyton* , and *Henry Clements* , esquires.

Six companies of militia are likewise to be called into duty immediately, from such counties as the Committee of Safety shall judge most expedient, and employed as rangers in the country of Fincastle, for the protection of the inhabitants; and this day William Russell, esq; one of the delegates for Fincastle, was appointed to the command of that body of militia, with the rank of lieutenant-colonel.

The body of regulars stationed on the Ohio are also to be augmented to 400 men, for the defense of the N. W. frontiers, the whole to be commanded by Joseph Neuville, esq; who ranks as major.

Two masters of vessels came to town this week, who were lately taken by the ministerial cruisers, and made their escape. They report, that lord Dunmore's whole army is now reduced to 40 regular soldiers, and 200 of the *Black Fufiteers*, 175 of which last corps died on their passage from Norfolk to Gwyn's island; and that Andrew Sprowle, esq; of Gosport, three days after his landing, departed this life, great part of which he spent in Virginia, much to his emolument, having amassed, by trade, a very capital fortune.

Governor Franklin of New Jersey has issued a proclamation, appointing a meeting of the General Assembly of that province, at Perth Amboy, on Thursday the 20th of this instant, having matters of great importance to communicate to them.

The Hon. the General Congress have been pleased to appoint doctor William Rickman, of Charles City, director-general and chief physician of the continental hospital in Virginia; and to promote col. Hugh Mercer, of the 3d regiment, to the rank of brigadier-general, who is soon to set out, we hear, for New York.

A Spanish brig from the Havannah, bound to Philadelphia, with 12,800 dollars on board, is taken off the capes of Delaware by the Liverpool frigate.

A few days ago one of the enemy's vessels ran aground on the Gloucester shore, within musket shot of our people, upon which the crew, five in number, jumped overboard. Two got safe to Gwyn's island, one was shot, and the other two were drowned.

Extract of a letter from a gentleman in Philadelphia, to his friend in this city, dated June 4, 1776.

"An experts is just arrived from Canada, with intelligence that the 8th regiment, collected from the various western forts, joined by Canadians in their neighbourhood, and Indians, to the number of 1000, had gone down the river St. Laurence, towards, and about 15 miles from that city, had attacked and cut off our post of 250 men at a place called The Cedars; and that a party of 100,

which had been sent from Montreal, to strengthen the above post, not knowing of its fate, had been also cut off. The latter party, it is said, bravely engaged and defeated 400 of the enemy; but were overpowered at last, by superiour numbers. We had no great force in Montreal, the greater part of the army being below, so that there is some reason to fear the enemy may get possession of that place. General Sullivan, however, with 3000 men, was crossing lake Champlain, and would soon come up with those gentry, in which case they would be between him and our army below. We have now 10,000 men in Canada, besides 6000 militia yesterday voted for that country, with 2000 auxiliary Indians; and they will be reinforced speedily with 10,000 regulars, and 15,000 militia. We hear a large three-decker, loaded with sugar, is on her way here, with two of our finall armed vessels guarding her. She was taken by them, on her voyage from Jamaica to London.—The men of war have been so roughly handled here, that they have left post entirely.—We this day receive the address of the city of London to the king, requesting that an explicit declaration of the just terms to be offered to America might precede the operations of arms. It is a well written, humane, and animated address, but the answer to it is most shocking: “ He is sorry for “ the *rebellion* , but *force* or *submission* must take “ place.” [A very pertinent reply might be made to this answer of the king's to his city of London, by the American people: “ We are sorry “ to find you are such a hard-hearted, foolish, “ and stubborn man, duped by your wicked “ counsellors, but we will not submit to be your “ *slaves* ; and as for *your forces* , aided by Hanoverians, “ Brunswickers, &c. we are ready to “ meet them, and trust that ALMIGHTY “ GOD, the avenger of wrongs, and defender “ of the cause of the innocent, will deliver them “ into our hands in his own good time, when “ they, finding themselves far removed from “ oppression, may quietly fit down with us, in “ this happy quarter of the globe, to till the “ ground, which so amply rewards the industrious “ farmer's toil.”]

Extract of a letter from a gentleman in Alexandria, to his friend in this city, dated the 10 th instant

“ The Maryland people seem much dissatisfied with their Convention, and it appears to me that nine tenths of the Western shore are for independence. —Governour Eden has left Annapolis. —A gentleman writes from Martinico, that we have many friends there, and that arms and ammunition are daily arriving. The latest advices from Old France were, that the king had dismissed his ambassadour to the British court, for presuming to tell the English ministry that his master would take no part in the present dispute. He says, he will act as he sees sit. The French, it is certain, are repairing Dunkirk; and I hope They will beat up a dust soon—to the confusion of our enemies.”

Extract from the ordinance for raising six troops of horse

BE it therefore ordained, &c. That six troops of horse, consisting of 30 each rank and file, be immediately raised, under proper officers, and taken into the service of this colony; and that each of the said companies be under the command of a captain, a lieutenant, a cornet, to be chosen by the Convention,

and three corporals, to be chosen by the captain, and be allowed a trumpeter, to be also appointed by the captain; and that the several officers and troopers shall, at their own expense, be furnished with horses, proper arms and accoutrements, and shall be allowed the following pay per day, besides rations and sorage, to wit: The captain 7 s. 6 d. the lieutenant 6 s. the cornet 5 s. the corporals 3s. each, a trumpeter 3 s. and a trooper 2 s. 6 d. which pay of the officers shall commence from the time of receiving of their being provided with a sufficient horse, and properly armed, in the opinion of any field-officer of the militia of the county wherein they are enlisted; and that the officers and troopers so to be raised shall continue in the service for such time as shall be judged necessary by the Committee of Safety, or others having the executive powers of government, but shall not be compelled to continue in service longer than one year, and that they shall be subject to the articles of war established for the regular forces, and to such orders as they shall from time to time receive from the commanding officer of the continental troops in this colony.

IN CONVENTION, June 6, 1776.

RESOLVED, that mr. *Draylon* , and mr. *Elliot* , officers from *South Carolina* , be permitted to recruit soldiers in this colony, provided they do not enlist any of the regulars, mariners, or minute-man, already engaged here in the continental or colonial service.

JUNE 14.

RESOLVED, that mess. *George Walton* , jun. *Joseph Pannell*, *Robert Walton* , jun. and *Samuel Scott* , officers from *Georgia* , be permitted to recruit soldiers in this colony, not exceeding 300, provided they do not enlist any of the regulars, marines, or minute-men, already engaged here in the continental or colonel service; and that it be recommended to the several county commitees to afford all possible assistance to them, and the recruiting officers from *South Carolina*.

EDMUND PENDLETON, president. (*A copy.*)

John Tazewell, clerk of the Convention.

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